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ABSTRACT

Focusing on clerical occupations, this document is one in a series of forty-one reprints from the Occupational Outlook Handbook providing current information and employment projections for individual occupations and industries through 1985. The specific occupations covered in this document include bookkeeping workers, file clerks, office machine operators, receptionists, secretaries, stenographers, shipping/receiving clerks, statistical clerks, stock clerks, typists, and occupations in the postal service (mail carriers and postal clerks). The following information is presented for each occupation or occupational area: a code number referenced to the Dictionary of Occupational Titles; a description of the nature of the work; places of employment; training, other qualifications, and advancement; employment outlook; earnings and working conditions; and sources of additional information. In addition to the forty-one reprints covering individual occupations or occupational areas (CE 017 757-797), a companion document (CE 017 756) presents employment projections for the total labor market and discusses the relationship between job prospects and education. (BM)

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Clerical Occupations

CE

Reprinted from the
Occupational Outlook Handbook,
1978-79 Edition.

U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics
1978

Bulletin 1955-5

Containing the midpoints of the legs of right triangle *RST*, whe
pt. (− 5, 5), *S* is pt. (1, 1), and *T* is pt. (3, 4).

Containing the longer diagonal of a quadrilateral whose vertic
pts. (2, 2), (− 2, − 2), (1, − 1), and (6, 4).

Show that the equations $y - 1 = \frac{1}{2}(x + 3)$ and $y - 4 = \frac{1}{2}(x$
are equivalent.

An equation of the line containing pts. (− 2, 3) and (4, − 1) c
written in the form $y - 3 = -\frac{1}{2}(x + 2)$ or in the
$y + 1 = -\frac{1}{2}(x - 4)$, depending upon which point you take
(x_1, y_1). Show that the two equations are equivalent.

Show that the equations are equivalent.

$$y - y_1 = \frac{y_2 - y_1}{x_2 - x_1}(x - x_1) \qquad y - y_2 = \frac{y_1 - y_2}{x_1 - x_2}(x - x$$

State the equation of a line through pt. (p, q) and parallel to
containing pts. (a, b) and (c, d). $(a \neq c)$.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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CE 017 760

BOOKKEEPING WORKERS

(D.O.T. 210.368 through .588, 216.388, and 219.388 and .488)

Nature of the Work

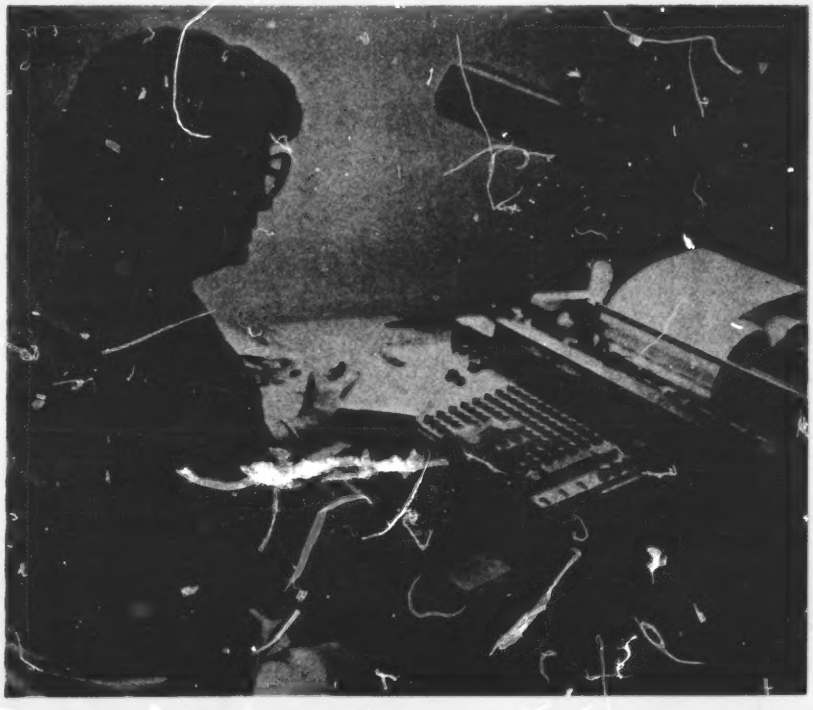
Every business needs systematic and up-to-date records of accounts and business transactions. Bookkeeping workers maintain these records in journals, ledgers, and on other accounting forms. They also prepare periodic financial statements showing all money received and paid out. The duties of bookkeeping workers vary with the size of the business.

In many small firms, *general bookkeepers* (D.O.T. 210.388) are the only bookkeeping workers. They analyze and record all financial transactions, such as orders and cash sales. They also check money taken in against that paid out to be sure accounts "balance," and calculate the firm's payroll. Although most of this work is done by hand, bookkeeping workers generally use simple office equipment such as calculating machines. General bookkeepers also prepare and mail customers' bills and answer the telephone.

In large businesses, a number of bookkeepers and accounting clerks work under the direction of a head or supervisory bookkeeper. In these organizations bookkeepers often specialize in certain types of work. For example, some prepare statements on a company's income from sales or its daily operating expenses. Others may post payments and charges on cards using bookkeeping machines, or feed information on accounts receivable and accounts payable into the computer. *Accounting clerks* (D.O.T. 219.488), sometimes known as bookkeeping clerks, perform a variety of routine duties. They record details of business transactions, including deductions from payrolls and bills paid and due. They also may type vouchers, invoices, and other financial records.

Places of Employment

Bookkeeping workers numbered almost 1.7 million persons in 1976. Jobs for bookkeeping workers are found in all kinds of firms, with an especially large number in wholesale and retail trade. More than 1 of every 3 bookkeepers work for a retail store or wholesale firm. In addition, many work in factories, banks, insurance companies, hospitals, and schools.



Bookkeeping workers need a knack for working with numbers.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

High school graduates who have taken business arithmetic, bookkeeping, and principles of accounting meet the minimum requirements for most bookkeeping jobs. Some employers, however, prefer applicants who have completed business courses at a junior college or business school and have had some experience working with accounts payable and receivable. A knowledge of how computers are used to perform bookkeeping operations is an asset.

Persons also may qualify for bookkeeping jobs through on-the-job training. In some areas, companies cooperate with business schools and high schools in work-study programs. These programs offer part-time experience that helps students get jobs soon after graduation.

Bookkeeping workers need above average aptitude for working with numbers and a knack for concentrating on details. They should be able to type and operate various office machines. Because they depend on other office workers for information, bookkeepers should be able to work as part of a team.

Newly hired bookkeeping workers begin by recording routine transactions in accounts receivable or accounts payable units. They advance to more responsible assignments, such as preparing income statements and operating complex bookkeeping machines or computers. Some workers are promoted to supervisory jobs. Bookkeepers who complete courses in college accounting may become accountants. (The occupation of accountant is discussed elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

Employment Outlook

Thousands of job openings for bookkeepers are expected every year through 1985. Jobs will be numerous even though employment of bookkeepers is expected to grow slowly over this period, for the occupation is

large and turnover is high. Most job openings will occur because of the need to replace workers who die, retire, or stop working for other reasons.

Future employment growth in this occupation will be slowed by the increasing use of various types of bookkeeping machines and electronic computers that process data more accurately, rapidly, and economically than workers doing it by hand.

Earnings and Working Conditions

Beginning accounting clerks in private firms averaged $637 a month in 1976, according to a Bureau of Labor Statistics survey of clerical occupations. They had higher salaries, on the average, than beginning file clerks or typists, but earned less than beginning secretaries or stenographers. Experienced accounting clerks earned $805 a month, about the same as the average for all nonsupervisory workers in private industry, except farming.

In 1977, starting salaries in the Federal Government ranged from $6,572 (GS-2) to $7,408 (GS-3) for bookkeeping workers right out of high school. Starting salaries were higher for bookkeeping workers with at least 2 years' work experience or 2 years of college education. These salaries ranged from $8,316 (GS-4) to $9,303 (GS-5) per year. Average salaries in the Federal Government in 1977 for general accounting clerks were $13,443 per year.

Working conditions for bookkeepers are similar to those of other office workers in the same firms. (See introductory section to this chapter for more information on earnings and working conditions and for sources of additional information.)

FILE CLERKS

(D.O.T. 132.388, 205.368, 206.388, 219.588, 920.887)

Nature of the Work

An orderly file system is often the key to an efficient office. In most offices, records are arranged so that information can be located quickly. This creates many job opportunities for file clerks, who keep records accurate, up to date, and properly placed.

File clerks classify, store, update, and retrieve office information on request. To do this, they read incoming material and put it in order for future use by means of some system, such as by number, letter of the alphabet, or subject matter. When these records are requested, file clerks locate them and turn them over to the borrower. They keep track of materials removed from the files and make sure that those given out are returned.

Some clerks operate mechanized files that rotate to bring the needed records to them. Others retrieve documents or spools of microfilm and place them in an electronic transmitter that displays the information on video terminals located elsewhere in the organization. Records also must be up to date in order to be useful. File clerks make sure that new information is added to existing files shortly after it is received.

From time to time, file clerks may destroy outdated file materials or transfer them to inactive storage. They check files at regular intervals to insure that all items are correctly placed. Whenever data cannot be located, the file clerk searches for the missing records. As an organization's needs for information change, file clerks modify old filing systems or establish new ones.

In small offices, file clerks often type, sort mail, or operate duplicating machines. Those who work with automated filing systems may code and microfilm all incoming documents

Places of Employment

About 270,000 persons worked as file clerks in 1976. In addition, many other clerical workers perform some filing tasks in connection with their work. Opportunities for part-time work are abundant in this occupation; in 1976, approximately 1 of every 4 file clerks worked part time.

Although filing jobs are found in almost every kind of organization, about one-half of all file clerks work in banks, insurance companies, factories, or government agencies.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Employers prefer high school graduates for beginning file clerk positions. Most seek applicants who can type, and many prefer those who have some knowledge of office practices as well. High schools, junior colleges, and private business schools

File clerk operating a mechanical filer.

teach these and other skills that help a beginner get a job. Many States and localities sponsor programs to train unemployed and low-skilled workers who can read and spell well for entry level clerical jobs such as file clerk.

Some on-the-job training usually is necessary because each organization has its own filing systems and office procedures. In organizations that have their own filing procedures, clerks learn their jobs in a few weeks. Learning to operate mechanical filing systems usually takes more time. Where file clerks have a variety of related duties, training may take up to 3 months.

File clerks must read accurately and rapidly, spell well, and like detailed work. Most file clerks must be able to type. They should be neat, able to work as part of a team, and not be easily bored by repeated tasks.

File clerks can advance to more difficult filing duties and to jobs supervising other file clerks. Those who learn additional skills may be promoted to office machine operators, receptionists, and typists.

Employment Outlook

Employment of file clerks is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through the mid-1980's as business expansion creates a need for more and better recordkeeping. In addition, a large number of file clerks will be needed each year to replace those who die, retire, or transfer to other jobs.

The growing volume of paper work and continued expansion of those businesses that traditionally have employed many file clerks should assure steady employment growth. However, this growth should be slower than in past years as computers are used more extensively to arrange, store, and transmit information. Jobseekers who have typing and other secretarial skills and are familiar with a wide range of office machines should have better opportunities than less experienced applicants. File clerks should find many opportunities for temporary or part-time work, especially during peak business periods.

Earnings and Working Conditions

According to a recent survey, beginning file clerks in urban areas averaged $113 a week in 1976. Those with some experience averaged $128; those with a great deal of experience, $158. File clerks earned somewhat less than three-fourths of the average earnings of nonsupervisory workers in private industry, except farming.

In the Federal Government, beginning file clerks without high school diplomas started at about $112 a week in 1977, and high school graduates began at $126 a week. Experienced file clerks in the Federal Government averaged about $171 a week in 1977.

Working conditions for file clerks usually are similar to those for other office workers in the same organization. Although they do not do heavy lifting, they often must stoop, bend, and reach. (See the statement on Clerical Occupations for information on fringe benefits and sources of additional information.)

OFFICE MACHINE OPERATORS

(D.O.T. 207.782, .884, and .885; 208.782; 213.782; 214.488; 215.388; 216.488; and 234.)

Nature of the Work

To speed the paperwork involved in operating a business, most firms employ office machine operators to record information, determine bills and inventories, and perform other calculations. This statement describes some of the more common machine operating jobs.

Billing machine operators (D.O.T. 214.488) prepare customer statements by typing information, such as customers' names, purchases, and amount of sales, on a billing machine that automatically computes the balances and required payments.

Bookkeeping machine operators (D.O.T. 215.388) record a firm's financial transactions on a bookkeeping machine and calculate trial balances, summary reports, and other necessary data.

Advances in data transmission devices will enable large employers to centralize recordkeeping.

Adding and calculating machine operators (D.O.T. 216.488) use mechanical adding machines and electronic calculators to compute payrolls and invoices and do other statistical work. Some calculators can also be used to compute square roots and percent distributions.

Mail preparing and mail handling machine operators (D.O.T. 234.) use machines to open incoming mail and prepare bills and letters for mailing. Some machines fold and insert enclosures, while others address, seal, and stamp envelopes. Addressing machines print addresses on envelopes using stencils or metal plates prepared by *embossing machine operators* (D.O.T. 208.782) using special typewriters.

Duplicating machine operators (D.O.T. 207.782, .884, and .885) operate equipment that can reproduce letters, bills, invoices, and other documents. Included are mimeograph, stencil, and copying machines. These workers keep the machines loaded with paper, see that they are properly adjusted for the number of copies to be made, and may collate--put together—pages of

lengthy documents by hand or machine.

Tabulating machine operators (D.O.T. 213.782) operate machines that sort and total large quantities of accounting and statistical information and print the results on special business forms.

Information about workers in several other occupations that use office machines can be found elsewhere in the *Handbook*, in the statements on computer and peripheral equipment operators, typists, and statistical clerks.

Places of Employment

In 1976, about 163,000 people worked as office machine operators. About one-fifth worked for manufacturing companies; large numbers also were employed by banks, insurance companies, and wholesale and retail stores. Many office machine operators work for service firms that prepare monthly bills and mailing circulars for businesses that do not have their own office machinery.

Training, Other Qualifications and Advancement

Employers prefer high school or business school graduates for jobs as office machine operators. Most newly hired workers are expected to be able to type and operate adding machines and calculators. A knowledge of business arithmetic is helpful.

The amount of instruction and on-the-job training beginners receive depends on the types of machines they operate. Although a few days of training usually are sufficient to train duplicating machine operators, several weeks may be needed to train bookkeeping machine operators. Some office machine operators are trained at company expense in schools run by equipment manufacturers.

Finger dexterity, good eye and hand coordination, and good vision are important for most office machine operator jobs. Billing and calculating machine operators should know simple arithmetic so they can detect obvious errors in computations. Some mechanical ability is advantageous, especially for duplicating and tabulating machine operators.

Most employers promote from within and give strong consideration to seniority and job performance as shown by supervisors' ratings. Promotion may be from a routine machine job to a more complex one, or to a related clerical job. Employers often provide any additional training that may be required. In firms having large clerical staffs, office machine operators may advance to jobs where they train beginners or to supervisory positions as section or department heads.

Employment Outlook

Employment of office machine operators is expected to grow more slowly than the average for all occupations through the mid-1980's. Most openings will result from the need to replace workers who die, retire, or leave the occupation.

Despite expected growth in the volume of billing, computing, and duplicating work, the occupation will expand slowly as computerized recordkeeping and processing systems spread. In addition, advances in data transmission devices will enable large employers to centralize recordkeeping, and to reduce the requirements for operators in branch offices.

Earnings and Working Conditions

A 1975 Bureau of Labor Statistics survey of earnings for several office machine operator occupations in urban areas showed that the lowest salaries were paid in the South and the highest in the North and West.

For some occupations averages are given separately for different skill groups. Operators in Class A were very experienced and performed comparatively difficult work. Those in Classes B and C had some or no experience, worked on more routine assignments, and used simpler equipment. The average weekly salaries reported in this survey are shown in the accompanying tabulation:

	Average weekly salaries, 1976
Billing machine operators	$160
Bookkeeping machine operators:	
Class A	170
Class B	140
Tabulating machine operators:	
Class A	240
Class B	200
Class C	160

Billing and bookkeeping machine operators earned slightly less than the average for all nonsupervisory workers in private industry, except farming.

Because some types of office machines are very noisy, operators may work in special areas apart from other company offices. In other respects, their working conditions are similar to those of other office workers in the same firms. (See the statement on clerical occupations for further information on working conditions and for sources of additional information.)

RECEPTIONISTS

(D.O.T. 235.862, 237.368)

Nature of the Work

All organizations want to make a good first impression on the public. This is an important part of the job of the receptionist, who generally is the first person a caller sees.

Receptionists greet customers and other visitors, determine their needs, and refer callers to the official who can help them. Receptionists in hospitals, after obtaining personal histories, direct patients to the proper waiting rooms; in beauty shops they arrange appointments and show customers to the operator's booth; and in large plants, they provide callers with identification cards and arrange escorts to take them to the proper office.

Many receptionists keep business records of callers, the times at which they called, and the persons to whom they were referred. When they are not busy with callers, receptionists

may type, file, or operate a switchboard. Some receptionists open and sort mail and collect and distribute messages. Still others prepare travel vouchers and do simple bookkeeping.

Places of Employment

About 500,000 persons worked as receptionists in 1976. Part-time employment is readily available for receptionists, and about 1 in 3 works part time.

Although receptionists work in almost every kind of organization, about half work for doctors, dentists, hospitals, and other health service providers. Large numbers of receptionists also work in insurance companies, banks, factories, and firms providing business and personal services.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

A high school diploma generally is required for work as a receptionist. Courses in English, spelling, typing, elementary bookkeeping, and business practices are helpful to the beginner.

Liking people and wanting to help them are assets to the receptionist. A neat appearance, a pleasant voice, and an even disposition also are important. Because receptionists do not work under close supervision, common sense and a thorough understanding of how the business is organized help them handle various situations that arise.

Promotion opportunities for receptionists are limited, especially in small offices. In large workplaces, however, a receptionist who has clerical skills may advance to a better paying job as a secretary, administrative assistant, or bookkeeper. Many companies have their own training programs so that the skills needed for advancement can be learned on the job. College or business school training also can be helpful in advancing to better paying office jobs.

Liking people and wanting to help them are important assets for receptionists.

Employment Outlook

Employment of receptionists is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through the mid-1980's. Thousands of openings will result each year as businesses expand and as receptionists who die, retire, or transfer to other jobs are replaced. The number of replacements will be quite large because the occupation is large and turnover is high.

Within the fast-growing clerical field, receptionist employment is expected to grow rapidly. This is largely because so many receptionists work for firms providing business, personal, and professional services—a sector of the economy which is expected to show very strong growth in the future. In addition, more and more firms recognize the importance of the receptionist in promoting good public relations. Also, because the receptionist's work is of a person-to-person nature, it is unlikely to be affected by office automation.

Job opportunities should continue to be excellent for persons who do not wish to work full time. This occupation also offers many opportunities for those without prior work experience.

Earnings and Working Conditions

Full-time switchboard operator-receptionists working in urban areas averaged $141 a week in 1976. This was about three-quarters as much as the average earnings for nonsupervisory workers in private industry, except farming. Receptionists working in the western United States had average weekly earnings of $149. Those in southern cities averaged $133 a week. In the Federal Government, beginning information receptionists averaged $171 a week in 1977.

Receptionists usually work in areas that are comfortably furnished. Although most have regular hours, receptionists in hospitals and beauty shops may work evenings and weekends. (See the statement on clerical occupations for sources of additional information.)

SECRETARIES AND STENOGRAPHERS

(D.O.T. 201.268 and .368, 202.388, and 209.138)

Nature of the Work

The efficiency of any organization depends upon *secretaries* and *stenographers*, who are at the center of communications within their firm. They transmit information to the staff and to persons in other organizations.

Secretaries (D.O.T. 201.368) relieve their employers of routine duties so that they can work on more important matters. Although most secretaries type, take shorthand, and deal with callers, the time spent on these duties varies in different types of organizations.

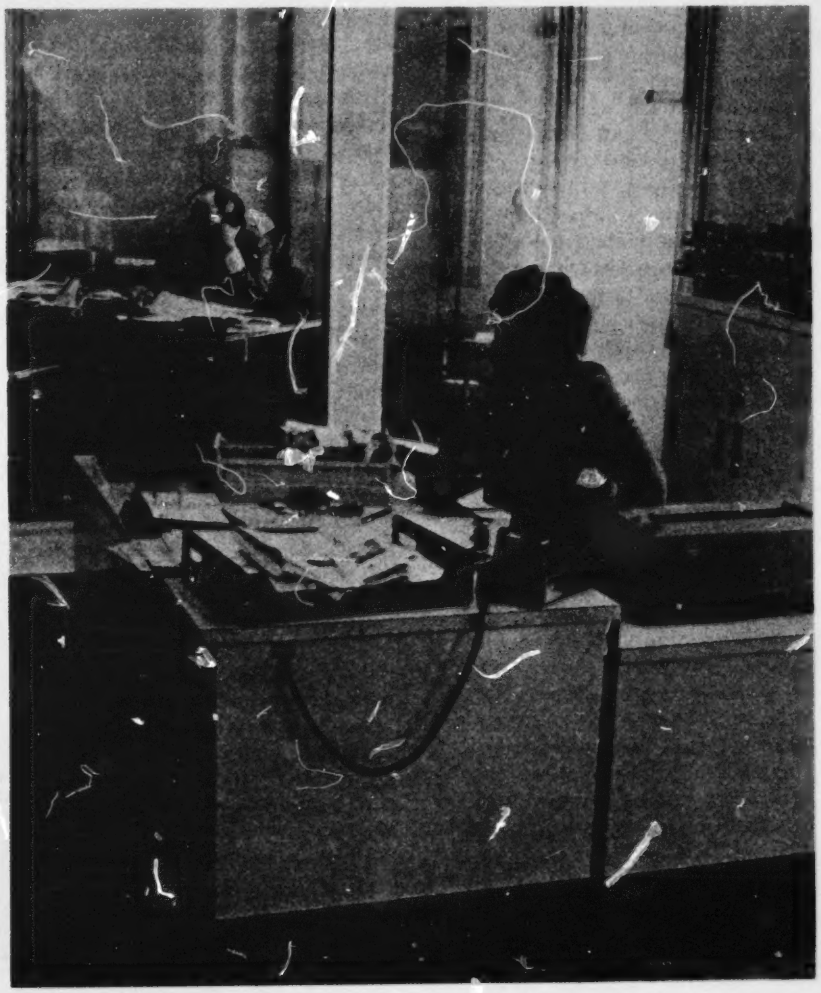
In offices where dictation and typing are handled in word processing centers, *administrative secretaries* handle all other secretarial duties. (For more information on these centers, see the statement on typists elsewhere in the *Handbook*.) They often work in clusters of three or four so that they can readily help each other. Because they are released from dictation and typing, they can serve several members of the professional staff. Their duties range from filing, routing mail, and answering telephones to more responsible jobs such as answering letters, doing statistical research, and writing reports.

Some secretaries are trained in specific skills needed in certain types of work. *Medical secretaries* prepare case histories and medical reports; *legal secretaries* do legal research and help prepare briefs; and *technical secretaries* assist engineers or scientists in drafting reports and research proposals. Another specialized secretary is the *social secretary* (D.O.T. 201.268), who arranges social functions, answers personal correspondence, and keeps the employer informed about all social activities.

Stenographers (D.O.T. 202.388) take dictation and then transcribe their notes on a typewriter. They may either take shorthand or use a stenotype machine that prints symbols as certain keys are pressed. *General stenographers*, including most beginners, take routine dictation and do other office tasks such as typing, filing, answering telephones, and operating office machines. Experienced and highly skilled stenographers take difficult dictation and do more responsible clerical work. They may sit in on staff meetings and give a summary report or a word-for-word record of the proceedings. They also supervise other stenographers, typists, and clerical workers. *Technical stenographers* must know the terms used in a particular profession. They include medical, legal, and engineering or scientific stenographers. Some experienced stenographers take dictation in foreign languages; others work as public stenographers serving traveling business people and others.

Shorthand reporters are specialized stenographers who record all statements made in a proceeding. Nearly half of all shorthand reporters work as *court reporters* attached to courts of law at different levels of government. They take down all statements made at legal proceedings and present their record as the official transcript. Many other shorthand reporters work as *free-lance reporters* who record out-of-court testimony for attorneys, meetings and conventions, and other private activities. Still others record the proceedings in the Congress of the United States, in State legislatures, and in both State and Federal agencies.

Most reporters dictate notes on magnetic tapes that a typist can tran-



Secretaries and stenographers are at the center of communications within their firms.

scribe later. Because the reporter's transcript is the official record of a proceeding, accuracy is vitally important.

Places of Employment

About 3.5 million persons worked in jobs requiring secretarial or stenographic skills in 1976; most were secretaries. Only about 100,000 persons worked as stenographers in 1976.

Opportunities for part-time work are increasing in these and other clerical occupations. In 1976, approximately one of every five secretaries and one in six stenographers worked part time.

Secretaries and stenographers are employed throughout the economy. About two-thirds of them, however, work in banks, insurance companies, real estate firms, government agencies, and other establishments providing services to the public. Most specialized stenographers and secretaries work for doctors, lawyers, and other professional people.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Generally, graduation from high school is required for a job as a secretary or stenographer. Many employers prefer applicants who have additional secretarial training at a college or private business school. Courses vary from a few months' instruction in basic shorthand and typing to longer programs teaching specialized skills such as shorthand reporting or legal or medical secretarial work. Shorthand reporters generally must complete a 2-year course in a shorthand reporting school.

An increasing number of private firms and government agencies have their own training facilities where employees can upgrade their skills and broaden their knowledge of the organization. Also, many State and local governments sponsor programs to train unemployed and low-skilled workers for entry jobs as secretaries.

Fourteen States require court reporters to be a Certified Shorthand Reporter (CSR). In some of these States, reporters can be hired with the understanding that they will be certified within 1 year. Certification is administered by a board of examiners in each of the 14 States. The National Shorthand Reporters Association confers the designation Registered Professional Reporter (RPR) upon those who pass a two-part examination and participate in continuing education programs. The RPR designation is recognized as the mark of excellence in the profession.

Employers usually have no preferences among the many different shorthand methods. The most important factors in hiring and promotion are speed and accuracy. To qualify for jobs in the Federal Government—and for employment in many private firms—stenographers must be able to take dictation at 100 words per minute and type 50 to 60 words per minute. Many shorthand reporting jobs require more than 225 words of dictation per minute; shorthand reporters in the Federal Government generally must take 175 words a minute.

Secretaries and stenographers should have good hearing; a knowledge of spelling, punctuation, and grammar and a good vocabulary are essential. The ability to concentrate amid distractions is vital for shorthand reporters. Employers look for persons who are poised and alert, and who have pleasant personalities. Discretion, judgment, and initiative are important for the more responsible secretarial positions.

Many stenographers who improve their skills advance to secretarial jobs; others who acquire the necessary speed through additional training can become shorthand reporters. Secretaries can increase their skills and broaden their knowledge of their company's operations by taking courses offered by the company or by local business schools, colleges, and universities. As secretaries gain knowledge and experience, they can qualify for the designation Certified Professional Secretary (CPS) by passing a series of exams given by the National Secretaries Association. This designation is recognized by a growing number of employers as the mark of achievement in the secretarial field. Many executive secretaries are promoted to management positions on the basis of their extensive knowledge of their employer's operations.

Employment Outlook

Employment of secretaries is expected to increase faster than the average for all occupations through the mid-1980's as the continued expansion of business and government creates a growing volume of paperwork. Hundreds of thousands of jobs will become available each year due to growth and the need to replace those who die, retire, or stop working for other reasons.

Demand for secretaries will rise mainly as those organizations that require large secretarial staffs expand their operations. New government agencies, particularly at the State and local level; insurance companies offering new forms of protection; and banks providing financial counseling for an increasingly affluent population are just a few of the organizations that will need well-trained and versatile secretaries in the years ahead. Although many new types of automatic office equipment have been introduced in recent years, no adverse impact on employment of secretaries is expected. However, jobseekers who are familiar with a wide range of office machines and procedures are likely to have better prospects than other workers.

Persons with secretarial skills should find extensive opportunities for temporary or part-time work as employers increasingly turn to these workers during peak business periods. Such arrangements may be especially attractive to students, persons with family responsibilities, retired persons, and others interested in flexible work schedules.

Employment of stenographers is expected to continue the decline of recent years. The increased use of dictation machines has severely reduced the need for office stenographers, and fewer jobs will be available than in the past. Demand for skilled shorthand reporters, in contrast to the overall outlook for stenographers, should remain strong as State and Federal court systems expand to handle the rising number of criminal court cases and civil lawsuits. Competition for entry level

jobs is increasing as more students enter the field. Opportunities will be best for those who have earned certification by the National Shorthand Reporters Association.

Earnings and Working Conditions

According to a Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) survey, general stenographers working in urban areas averaged $706 a month in 1976; experienced workers who were highly skilled averaged $788. Shorthand reporters generally earn higher salaries than other stenographic workers. According to a survey conducted by The National Shorthand Reporters Association, shorthand reporters averaged about $15,000 a year in 1976.

According to the BLS survey, secretaries to supervisors in small offices earned monthly salaries of $741. Secretaries to officers in small companies had average monthly salaries of $804; those working for middle management in large companies averaged $868. Secretaries having greater responsibilities, such as executive secretaries to corporate officers, earned average monthly salaries of $954.

Beginning clerk-stenographers in the Federal Government earned from $548 to $775 a month in 1977 depending on education, training, and experience. Earnings of beginning shorthand reporters ranged from $864 to $1,175 a month depending on speed, education, and experience. Starting salaries for secretaries in the Federal Government ranged from $775 to $960 a month, while the average for all secretaries was $982 a month. In 1976, earnings of stenographers were slightly less and those of secretaries slightly more than average earnings for all nonsupervisory workers in private industry, except farming.

Working conditions for secretaries and stenographers generally are similar to those of other office workers in the same organization. Shorthand reporters, however, often sit for long periods of time while recording an event. (See the statement on clerical occupations for more information on earnings and working conditions.)

Sources of Additional Information

For information on careers in secretarial work, write to:

National Secretaries Association (International), 2440 Pershing Rd., Suite G10, Kansas City, Mo. 64108.

Additional information on careers in secretarial work and a directory of business schools are available from:

Association of Independent Colleges and Schools, 1730 M St. NW., Washington, D.C. 20036.

For information about shorthand reporting, contact:

National Shorthand Reporters Association, 2361 South Jefferson Davis Hwy., Arlington, Va. 22202.

SHIPPING AND RECEIVING CLERKS

(D.O.T. 209.688, 219.388, 222.138 through .687, 223.387, 239.588, 910.368 and 920.887)

Nature of the Work

Shipping and receiving clerks keep track of goods transferred between businesses and their customers and suppliers. In small companies, one clerk may keep records of all shipments sent out and received; in larger companies, many clerks take care of this recordkeeping.

Shipping clerks are responsible for all shipments leaving a business place. Before goods are sent to a customer, these clerks check to be sure the order has been filled correctly. Some shipping clerks fill orders themselves. They obtain merchandise from the stockroom and wrap it or pack it in shipping containers. Clerks also put addresses and other identifying information on packages, look up and compute either freight or postal rates, and record the weight and cost of each shipment. They also may prepare invoices and furnish information about shipments to other parts of the company, such as the accounting department. Once a shipment is checked and ready to go, shipping clerks may move it to the shipping dock and direct its loading on trucks according to its destination. Shipping and receiving clerks working in small businesses may combine these tasks with the various duties of stock

Receiving clerk carefully checks manifest.

clerks. (For more information about the additional duties of shipping clerks in small firms, see the statement on stock clerks elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

When shipments arrive, receiving clerks perform tasks similar to those of shipping clerks. They determine whether their employer's orders have been correctly filled by verifying incoming shipments against the original order and the accompanying bill of lading or invoice. They record the receipt and condition of incoming shipments. Clerks also make adjustments with shippers for lost and damaged merchandise. Routing or moving shipments to the proper department, warehouse section, or stockroom and providing information that is needed to compute inventories also may be part of their job.

Places of Employment

About 440,000 persons worked as shipping and receiving clerks in 1976. More than half worked in factories; large numbers also were employed by wholesale houses or retail stores. Although jobs for shipping and receiving clerks are found in all localities, most clerks work in urban areas, where many factories and wholesale houses are located.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

High school graduates are preferred for beginning jobs in shipping and receiving departments. Business arithmetic, typing, and other high school business subjects are helpful. The ability to write legibly is important. Dependability and an interest in learning about the firm's products and business activities also are qualities that employers seek. In addition, shipping and receiving clerks should be able to work under close supervision at repetitive tasks.

New employees usually are trained on the job by an experienced worker. As part of their training they often file, check addresses, attach labels, and check items included in shipments. As clerks gain experience, they may be assigned tasks requiring a good deal of independent judgment, such as handling problems of damaged merchandise, or supervising other workers in shipping or receiving rooms.

A job as a shipping or receiving clerk offers a good opportunity for new workers in a firm to learn about their company's products and business practices. Some clerks may be promoted to head shipping or receiving clerk or warehouse manager. Others may enter related fields such as industrial traffic management or purchasing. (Industrial traffic managers and purchasing agents are discussed elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

Employment Outlook

Employment of shipping and receiving clerks is expected to rise about as fast as the average for all occupations through the mid-1980's as business expands and there are more goods to be distributed. Several thousand jobs will become available each year as employment grows and as workers retire, die, or transfer to other occupations.

Although substantial growth is expected in the volume of goods to be moved, employment of shipping and receiving clerks will not increase as rapidly because of changes in technology that enable fewer clerks to handle more goods. Growing numbers of firms are using computers to keep track of shipping and receiving records, and moving belts to handle shipments once lifted by hand.

Earnings and Working Conditions

Shipping and receiving clerks in urban areas averaged $200 a week, according to a 1976 survey. This is about as much as the average earnings for all nonsupervisory workers in private industry, except farming. Salaries varied substantially, however, by type of employer. Shipping and receiving clerks employed by manufacturing firms averaged $200, those working for wholesale houses averaged $210, and those employed by public utilities averaged $248.

Most shipping and receiving clerks receive time-and-a-half for work over 40 hours. Night work and overtime, including work on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, may be necessary when shipments have been unduly delayed or when materials are needed immediately on production lines. Although shipping and receiving clerks do much of their work in warehouses or in shipping and receiving rooms, they may do some of it on outside loading platforms. Workplaces often are large, unpartitioned areas that may be drafty, cold, and littered with packing materials.

Most clerks must stand for long periods while they check merchandise. Locating numbers and descriptions on cartons often requires a great deal of bending, stooping, and stretching. Also, under the pressure of getting shipments moved on time, clerks sometimes may help load or unload materials in the warehouse. (See the statement on clerical occupations for additional information on fringe benefits.)

Sources of Additional Information

Information about the work and earnings of shipping and receiving clerks in wholesale establishments is available from:

National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors, 1725 K St. NW., Washington, D.C. 20006.

STATISTICAL CLERKS

(D.O.T. 205.368, 206.588, 209.388, 219.388, .488, and .588, 222.687, 223.588, 913.368, and 953.168)

Nature of the Work

Administrators and managers in all types of organizations depend on numerical records to help make decisions. Statistical clerks prepare and insure the accuracy and completeness of these records. Although the occupational title "statistical clerk" covers a number of different jobs performed by statistical workers, the jobs in this field can be grouped into four categories: recording, compiling and coding, computing and tabulating, and scheduling.

Recording. This work involves collecting and verifying the accuracy of information. *Shipping checkers* (D.O.T. 222.687) in manufacturing

companies and wholesale and retail businesses insure that merchandise to be shipped is properly labeled and contains the desired number of items. *Car checkers* (D.O.T. 209.588) keep records of shipments as they arrive at or leave a railroad freight terminal. They check the number of railroad cars and verify their contents with the specifications on the invoice. *Counters* (D.O.T. 223.588), who may have a title specifying their work or the items that they count, record the number of materials received, transferred, or produced. For example, lumber talliers or lumber checkers record the amount and type of lumber processed in sawmills; pit recorders collect production data in the steel industry.

Compiling and coding. In organizations of all types, information must be properly filed, verified, or analyzed for data processing. *Posting clerks* (D.O.T. 219.588) do this work by making entries in registers and journals. They receive and sort records of shipments, production, and financial transactions to provide company officials with current information on business activities. *Record keepers* (D.O.T. 206.588), also known as classification clerks, record data systematically for easy location. *Coding clerks* (D.O.T. 219.388) convert information obtained from records and reports into computer codes for data processing. *Personnel clerks* (D.O.T. 205.368) gather and file information on the employees of a business; their work may include some typing and preparation of reports.

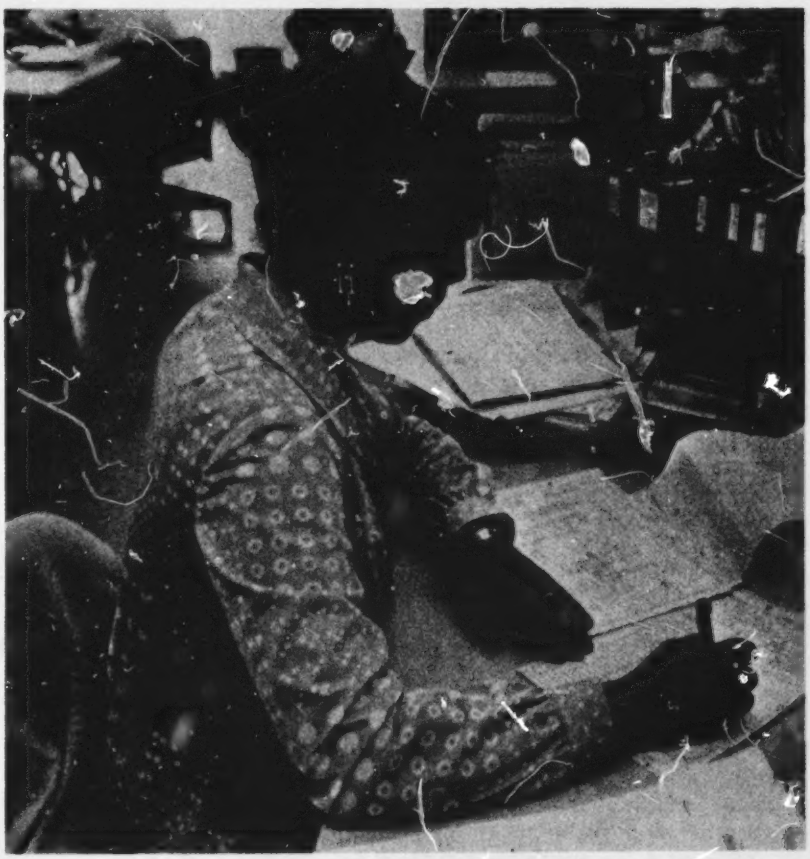
Computing and tabulating. Organizations frequently use numerical records for reports and research. Statistical clerks gather information from records to present in a chart or table for analysis. *Actuary clerks* (D.O.T. 219.388) use certain formulas, statistical charts, and insurance rate books to assist actuaries in determining insurance rates for company customers. They also prepare charts and tables for studies on general insurance practices. *Policy checkers* (D.O.T. 219.488) verify the accuracy of insurance company records. *Statistical assistants* (D.O.T. 219.388), also known as tabulating clerks, calculate and compute numerical data on the population and its characteristics for government and business research projects. *Demurrage clerks* (D.O.T. 219.388), employed by railroads, use rate tables to compute railway freight charges and calculate the weight of shipments or distance railroad cars have traveled.

Scheduling. Statistical clerks may schedule business activities that involve the movement of people and things. Through planning, they assure that these activities run smoothly and efficiently. For example, *assignment clerks* (D.O.T. 913.368) work for bus companies and assign drivers to meet riders' transportation needs. Drivers are selected on the basis of experience, seniority, and nature of the assignment. *Crew schedulers* (D.O.T. 219.388) do similar work for airlines; they assign pilots to scheduled flights and log the mileage each pilot has flown. *Gas dispatchers* (D.O.T. 953.168) determine the proper pressure in a natural gasline to meet customers' requirements after considering information such as the weather, time of day, and other factors that affect the use of gas.

Places of Employment

About 337,000 persons worked as statistical clerks in 1976. Although statistical clerks are employed in nearly every industry, over half worked in finance, insurance, and real estate companies; manufacturing firms; and Federal, State, and local government.

Because businesses of almost every size require numerical records, statistical clerks work throughout the United States. Jobs are concentrated, however, in heavily populated cities that are centers of industry and government activities.



Statistical clerks compile the numerical records often used by management to make decisions.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Most employers prefer to hire high school graduates for statistical clerk jobs. They also seek applicants who have an aptitude for working with numbers and the ability to do detailed work. High school students may prepare for jobs as statistical clerks by taking courses in general mathematics, algebra, and geometry. Also recommended are courses in data processing, office procedures, bookkeeping, and typing.

In many companies, general clerks who have become familiar with their employers' record systems and office procedures are promoted to statistical clerk positions. On-the-job training that equips the employee to specialize in numerical work may include the use of calculators, tabulating machines, and typewriters.

Statistical clerks must be familiar with the items or information which they observe and record. For example, lumber checkers must know the various types and qualities of wood products. In preparing data for processing, coding clerks must use the proper computer codes to avoid errors.

Statistical clerks should be able to do prompt and accurate work under close supervision. Also, they should be tactful and even tempered when working with others in the same office.

Most employers follow a promotion-from-within policy that allows experienced workers to qualify for more responsible jobs as they become available. Qualified statistical clerks may perform more difficult assignments or advance to supervisory positions. Some statistical clerks are able to advance to a technician level where they may deal with the technical problems of statistical research projects. Some clerks become computer programmers.

Employment Outlook

Employment of statistical clerks is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through the mid-1980's. In addition to job opportunities arising from this growth, many additional openings will occur as clerks die, retire, or leave the occupation for other reasons.

This occupation includes a wide range of jobs, and the prospects for statistical clerks are better in certain areas than in others. Some routine jobs, for example, may be eliminated as computers are increasingly used to collect and process information. However, statistical clerks in jobs such as those that require personal contact or involve the preparation of data for computer analysis are expected to be in great demand.

Among the factors that will contribute to the demand for statistical clerks is the expected increase in business and government activities, including projects requiring the collection and processing of large amounts of numerical data. In addition, administrators increasingly will rely on numerical records to analyze and control all aspects of their organization's work.

Earnings and Working Conditions

Limited information indicates that beginning statistical clerks earn about as much as workers in other entry level clerical jobs such as office clerks or file clerks; salaries for these workers ranged between $110 and $130 a week in 1976. The entrance salary for beginning statistical assistants employed by the Federal Government was $142 a week in 1977.

Most experienced workers doing statistically related clerical work, including the operation of tabulating machines or calculators, earned between $155 and $200 a week in 1976. Top level clerks and supervisors averaged about $235 a week. Earnings usually are highest in manufacturing, transportation, and utilities industries; they are lower in retail trade, finance, insurance, and real estate, and service industries.

Nearly every employer of statistical clerks offers some form of health plan, life insurance coverage, and retirement benefits. Most statistical clerks work in clean, well-lighted and well-ventilated offices. (See the statement on clerical occupations for sources of additional information.)

STOCK CLERKS

(D.O.T. 223.138, .368, .387, .388, .588, .687; 910.388; 969.387)

Nature of the Work

Most employers recognize the importance of keeping well-balanced inventories to prevent sales losses or slowdowns in production.

Stock clerks (D.O.T. 223.387) help protect against such losses by controlling the flow of goods received, stored, and issued. They usually receive and unpack incoming merchandise or material. They report damaged or spoiled goods and process papers necessary for obtaining replacements or credit. On outgoing orders, they may check the items for quality and quantity and sometimes make minor repairs or adjustments.

Materials are stored in bins, on the floor, or on shelves according to the plan of the stockroom. Stock clerks organize and mark items with identifying codes or prices so that inventories can be located quickly and easily. They keep records of items entering or leaving the stockroom. Sometimes they label, pack, crate, or address goods for delivery.

Stock clerks working in small firms also may perform various duties usually handled by shipping and receiving clerks. (For more information about the additional duties of stock clerks in small firms, see the statement on shipping and receiving clerks elsewhere in the *Handbook*.) In large firms with specialized jobs, *inventory clerks* (D.O.T. 223.388) periodically count items on hand and make reports showing stock balances. *Procurement clerks* (D.O.T. 223.368) work in factories and prepare orders for the purchase of new equipment.

The duties of stock clerks also depend on the items they handle. For example, stock clerks who work with food and drugs must maintain proper temperature and humidity conditions to prevent spoilage; those who handle construction items such as lumber and bricks must do much walking and climbing to note the condition and quantity of that stock.

Places of Employment

About 490,000 persons worked as stock clerks in 1976. About three-fourths of them worked in factories, wholesale firms, and retail stores. Many others were employed by airlines, government agencies, hospitals, and other organizations that keep large quantities of goods on hand. Although jobs for stock clerks are found in all parts of the country, most work in urban areas where factories, warehouses, and stores are concentrated.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Although there are no specific educational requirements for beginning stock clerks, employers prefer high school graduates. Reading and writing skills and a basic knowledge of mathematics are necessary; typing and filing abilities also are useful. Good health, especially good eyesight, is important. Generally, those who handle jewelry, liquor, or drugs must be bonded.

Stock clerks usually receive on-the-job training. New workers begin with simple tasks such as counting and marking stock. Basic responsibilities of the job usually are learned within several weeks. As they progress, stock clerks learn to keep records of incoming and outgoing materials, take inventories, and order supplies. In small firms, stock clerks may advance to sales positions or become assistant buyers or purchasing agents. In large firms, stock clerks can advance to more responsible stock handling jobs such as invoice clerk, stock control clerk, or procurement clerk. A few may be promoted to stockroom supervisor, but additional education often is required.

Employment Outlook

Employment of stock clerks is expected to increase about as fast as the average for all occupations through the mid-1980's. Many thousands of job openings will occur each year as employment grows and as workers die, retire, or transfer to other occupations.

Growth in employment of stock clerks probably will be slower than in the past as computers are used increasingly for inventory control. Because entrance into this occupation is relatively easy and many young people seek this work as a first job, some competition for openings is likely.

Earnings and Working Conditions

Experienced stock clerks earned average weekly salaries of $192 in 1976, according to the limited data available. This was slightly above the average for nonsupervisory workers in private industry, except farming.

In the Federal Government, beginning stock clerks without experience were paid $126 a week in late 1976; those with general work experience received $142 a week. Experienced stock clerks in the Federal Government averaged about $203 a week in 1976.

Stock clerks generally receive time-and-one-half for work over 40 hours. Overtime may be required when large shipments are delivered and when inventory is taken.

Although stock clerks usually work in relatively clean, heated, and well-lighted areas, some stockrooms may be damp and drafty. Clerks handling refrigerated goods may spend some time in cold storage rooms. Stock clerks are on their feet much of the working day, often on a concrete floor. The job also involves considerable bending, lifting, and climbing. (See the statement on clerical occupations for additional information on working conditions and fringe benefits.)

Sources of Additional Information

Information about the work and earnings of stock clerks in wholesale establishments is available from:

National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors, 1725 K St. NW., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Some competition is likely for stock clerk positions because many young people seek this work as a first job.

TYPISTS

(D.O.T. 203.138 through .588; 208.588; and 209.382 through .588)

Nature of the Work

A rapid flow of written communication is essential to the modern office. The typist helps to maintain this flow by making neat, typed copies of handwritten, printed, and recorded words.

Beginning or *junior typists* usually type headings on form letters, copy directly from handwritten drafts, and address envelopes. Often, they do other office tasks, including answering telephones, filing, and operating office machines such as copiers and calculators.

More experienced typists do work that requires a high degree of accuracy and independent judgment. *Senior typists* work from rough drafts which are difficult to read or which contain technical material. They may plan and type complicated statistical tables, combine and rearrange materials from different sources, or prepare master copies to be reproduced on copying machines.

Clerk typists (D.O.T. 209.388) combine typing with filing, sorting mail, answering telephones, and other general office work. *Varitypists* (D.O.T. 203.582) produce master copies, such as stencils, on machines similar to typewriters.

Transcribing machine operators (D.O.T. 208.588) type letters and reports as they listen to dictation recorded on magnetic tape. Other typists who have special duties include *policy writers* (D.O.T. 203.588) in insurance companies, *waybill clerks* (D.O.T. 209.588) in railroad offices, and *mortgage clerks* (D.O.T. 203.588) who work in banks.

In some offices, many typists are grouped in a specialized word processing center that handles all the transcription and typing for several departments. These workers, usually called *correspondence secretaries*, operate various kinds of high-speed typewriters equipped with a programmed memory which enables them to produce final copy with a minimum of retyping.

Places of Employment

About 1 million persons worked as typists in 1976. In addition, many other workers—including secretaries, newspaper reporters, writers, and editors—use typing skills in the performance of their jobs.

Part-time employment is readily available for workers with clerical skills, and nearly one typist out of four works part time. Typists are employed throughout the entire economy. Over half of them work in factories, banks, insurance companies, real estate firms, and government agencies.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Typists generally need a high school diploma. Good spelling, punctuation, and grammar are essential. Ability to operate office equipment, such as copying and adding machines, and also a knowledge of office procedures, are assets.

An increasing number of companies and government organizations have their own typist training programs. These give employees a chance to learn or upgrade skills so that they can advance to more responsible positions within the organization. Many States and localities sponsor programs to train unemployed and low-skilled workers for entry jobs as typists.

Many employers require applicants for typing jobs to take a test that shows their speed and accuracy. For most jobs, a speed of 50 to 60 words per minute is required. All typists who transcribe recorded dictation need sharp hearing and must be especially good in spelling. Successful typists are neat, accurate, and able to concentrate amid distractions.

As beginners increase their skills, they often advance to higher level typing jobs. Some typists are promoted to supervisor jobs in word processing centers. Others who master additional skills can move into secretarial jobs.

Employment Outlook

The number of typists is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through the mid-1980's as business expansion increases the volume of paperwork. Many job openings will occur every year because turnover in this occupation is very high. Jobs for typists also

Nearly 1 out of 4 typists works part time.

will become available as employment continues to grow.

Continued growth of the economy, particularly those industries that generate vast quantities of written records and correspondence, will assure very good prospects for typists in the years ahead. Demand should be particularly strong for highly skilled workers and those who can handle other office jobs in addition to typing. Many employers will prefer typists who are familiar with new kinds of word processing equipment. Because an increasing number of employers are using temporary and part-time workers during peak business periods, opportunities should continue to be excellent for typists who do not wish to work full time.

Earnings and Working Conditions

According to a recent survey, beginning typists averaged $142 a week in 1976. Those with experience earned $166 a week, slightly less than the average earnings for nonsupervisory workers in private industry, except farming.

In the Federal Government, the starting salary for typists without experience was $126 a week in 1977, compared with $160 a week for those with experience. Average weekly earnings for all typists in the Federal Government were $157.

Working conditions for typists usually are similar to those for other office employees. Typists, like other clerical workers, sit for periods of time and often must contend with high noise levels caused by office machines located nearby. (See the statement on clerical occupations for more information on working conditions and also for a list of places to write for additional information on clerical jobs.)

OCCUPATIONS IN THE POSTAL SERVICE

The U.S. Postal Service handled about 90 billion pieces of mail in 1976, including letters, magazines, and parcels. About 680,000 workers were required to process and deliver this mail. The vast majority of Postal Service jobs are open to workers with 4 years of high school or less. The work is steady, and the pay starts at about $12,000 a year for most workers. Some of the jobs, such as mail carrier, offer a good deal of personal freedom. Other jobs, however, are more closely supervised and more routine.

Nature and Location of the Industry

Most people are familiar with the duties of the mail carrier, yet few are aware of the many different tasks required in processing mail and of the variety of occupations in the Postal Service.

At all hours of the day and night, a steady stream of letters, packages, magazines, and papers moves through the postal system. Mail carriers collect mail from neighborhood mailboxes and bring it to post offices that truck it to the nearest mail processing center for sorting by postal clerks. There are more than 300 large mail processing centers, each responsible for sorting the outgoing and incoming mail for an area of the United States. Outgoing mail is sorted and sent by truck or airplane to the appropriate mail processing center in another area of the country. Incoming mail is sorted for the various local post offices in the area, trucked to the post offices, and then sorted again for delivery by mail carriers to homes and business establishments. (Detailed information on mail carriers and postal clerks appears elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

Mailhandlers load, unload, and move mail sacks and bulk mail, such as parcels and packages. They separate and distribute mail sacks to postal clerks for processing. Some also rewrap parcels and packages or operate canceling machines, fork-lift trucks, or addressograph and mimeograph machines.

Technicians and mechanics maintain, test, repair, and overhaul machinery that processes mail or dispenses stamps. Some technicians specialize in maintenance of electronic equipment.

Many postal service jobs do not require formal education or special training.

To keep buildings and equipment clean and in good working order, the Postal Service employs a variety of service and maintenance workers. Included are janitors, laborers, vehicle mechanics, electricians, carpenters, and painters.

Postal inspectors audit post offices' operations to see that they are run efficiently, that funds are spent properly, and that postal laws and regulations are observed. They also investigate crimes such as theft, forgery, and fraud involving use of the mail.

Postmasters and line supervisors are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the post office. They supervise mailhandlers, clerks, carriers, and technicians; hire and train employees; and set up work schedules. Postmasters manage a post office, station, or branch.

More than 9 out of 10 postal workers were employed in 1 of 5 occupations in 1976. The 270,000 postal clerks and 250,000 mail carriers together accounted for 3 out of 4 postal jobs. The 40,000 mailhandlers, 40,000 line supervisors, and 30,000 postmasters were the next largest postal occupations. The postal service also employs many postal inspectors, guards, truckdrivers, administrative workers, and secretaries.

The Postal Service operates more than 40,000 post offices, stations and branches, community post offices, and contract postal stations and branches. They range in size from the large metropolitan postal station that employes hundreds of workers, to the small contract station or branch that occupies a corner of a country store. Most are post offices, but some postal facilities serve special purposes, such as handling payroll records or supplying equipment.

Although every community receives mail service, employment is concentrated in large metropolitan areas. Post offices in cities such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles employ a great number of workers not only because they process huge amounts of mail for their own populations but also because they serve as mail processing points for the smaller communities that surround them.

The Postal Service also contracts with private businesses to transport mail. In 1976, there were more than 12,000 of these "Star" route contracts. Most "Star" route carriers use trucks to haul mail, but some use airplanes or boats instead.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

An applicant for a Postal Service job must pass a written examination and meet minimum age requirements. Generally, the minimum age is 18, but a high school graduate may begin work at 16 if the job is not hazardous and does not require use of a motor vehicle. Many Postal Service jobs do not require formal education or special training. Applicants for these jobs are hired on the basis of their examination scores.

Applicants should apply at the post office where they wish to work and take the entrance examination for the job they want. Examinations for most jobs include a written test that checks an applicants vocabulary and reading ability, as well as any special abilities required, such as aptitude for remembering addresses. A physical examination is required, as well. Applicants for jobs that require strength and stamina are sometimes given a special test. For example, mailhandlers must be able to lift and carry mail sacks weighing up to 70 pounds. The names of applicants who pass the examinations are placed on a list in the order of their scores. Separate eligibility lists are maintained for each post office. Five extra points are added to the score of an honorably discharged veteran, and 10 extra points to the score of a veteran wounded in combat or disabled. When a job opens, the appointing officer chooses one of the top three applicants. Others are left on the list so that they can be considered for future openings.

New employees are trained either on the job by supervisors and other experienced employees or in local training centers. Training ranges from a few days to several months, depending on the job. For example, mailhandlers and custodians can learn their jobs in a relatively short time while postal inspectors need months of training.

Postal workers are classified as casual, part-time flexible, part-time regular, or full-time. Casual workers are hired to help handle the large amounts of mail during the Christmas season and for other short-term assignments. Part-time flexible employees, although they have career status, do not have a regular work schedule but replace absent workers or help with extra work loads as the need arises. Part-time regulars have a set work schedule—for example, 4 hours a day. Carriers, clerks, and mailhandlers may start as part-time flexible workers and move into full-time jobs according to their seniority as vacancies occur.

Postal workers can advance to better paying positions by learning new skills. Training programs are available for low-skilled workers who wish to become technicians or mechanics. Also, employees can get preferred assignments, such as the day shift or a more desirable delivery route, as their seniority increases. When an opening occurs, eligible employees may submit written requests, called "bids," for assignment to the vacancy. The bidder who meets the qualifications for the assignment and has the most seniority gets the job.

Applicants for supervisory jobs must pass an examination. Additional requirements for promotion may include training or education, a satisfactory work record, and appropriate personal characteristics such as leadership ability. If the leading candidates are equally qualified, length of service also is considered. Although opportunities for promotion to supervisory positions in smaller post offices are limited, workers may apply for vacancies in a larger post office and thus increase their chances.

Employment Outlook

Employment in the Postal Service is expected to decline through the mid-1980's as mail processing systems become more efficient and as mail volume falls because of rising postal rates and increasing reliance on the telephone for personal communication. Anticipated cutbacks in

the frequency of home deliveries will offset any employment growth stemming from increases in the number of homes and business establishments. Consolidation of the postal system is expected to result in the closing of many small post offices reducing requirements for postmasters, guards, and maintenance and support personnel. Nevertheless, thousands of job openings will result annually as workers retire, die, or transfer to other fields.

Earnings and Working Conditions

Postal Service employees are paid under several separate pay schedules depending upon the duties of the job, knowledge, experience, or skills required. For example, there are separate schedules for production workers, such as clerks, city mail carriers, and mailhandlers; for rural carriers; for supervisors; for nonsuperisory administrative, technical, and clerical workers; and for postal executives. In all pay schedules, except that of executives, employees receive periodic "step" increases up to a specified maximum if their job performance is satisfactory. In addition, salaries of most postal workers are automatically adjusted for changes in the cost of living.

Full-time employees work an 8-hour day 5 days a week. Both full-time and part-time employees who work more than 8 hours a day or 40 hours a week receive overtime pay of one-and-one-half times their hourly rates. They also receive extra pay for night and Sunday work.

In 1976, postal employees earned 13 days of annual leave (vacation) during each of their first 3 years of service, including prior Federal civilian and military service; 20 days each year for 3 to 15 years of service; and 26 days after 15 years. In addition, they earned 13 days of paid sick leave a year regardless of length of service.

Other benefits include retirement and survivorship annuities, and low-cost life and health insurance programs supported in part by the Postal Service.

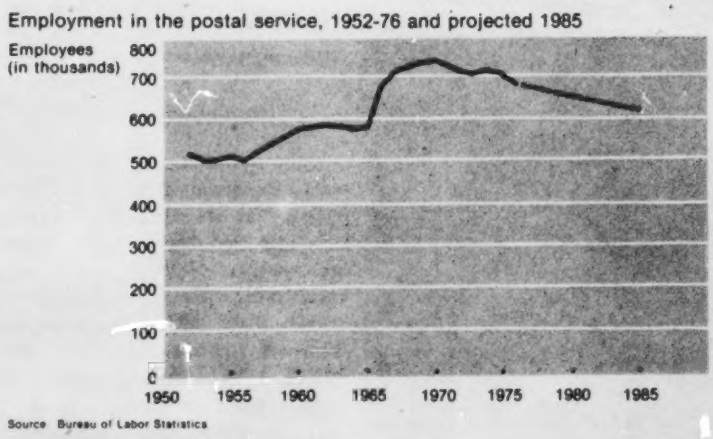
Most post office buildings are clean and well lighted, but some of the older ones are not. The Postal Service is in the process of replacing and remodeling its outmoded buildings, and conditions are expected to improve.

Most postal workers are members of unions and are covered by one of several negotiated bargaining agreements between the Postal Service and the unions.

Sources of Additional Information

Local post offices and State employment service offices can supply details about entrance examinations and employment opportunities in the Postal Service.

Employment in the postal service is expected to decrease due to mechanization and falling mail volume



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

MAIL CARRIERS

(D.O.T. 233.138 and 233.388)

Nature of the Work

Most mail carriers travel planned routes delivering and collecting mail. Carriers start work at the post office early in the morning, where they spend a few hours arranging their mail for delivery and taking care of other details.

A carrier may cover the route on foot, by vehicle, or a combination of both. On foot, they tote a heavy load of mail in a satchel or push it in a cart. In outlying suburban or rural areas a car or small truck is used to deliver mail. Residential carriers cover their routes only once a day, but carriers assigned to a business district may make two trips a day. Deliveries are made house-to-house, to roadside mailboxes, and to large buildings, such as apartments, which have all the mailboxes on the first floor.

Besides making deliveries, carriers collect postage-due and c.o.d. fees and obtain signed receipts for registered, certified, and sometimes for insured mail. If a customer is not home the carrier leaves a notice that tells where special mail is being held.

After completing their routes, carriers return to the post office with mail gathered from street collection boxes and homes. They turn in the accountable mail receipts and money collected during the day and may separate letters and parcels so that they can be canceled easily, and they turn in the receipts and money collected.

Many carriers have more specialized duties. Some deliver only parcel post while others collect mail from street boxes and office mail chutes. In contrast, rural carriers provide a wide variety of postal services. In addition to delivering and picking up mail, they sell stamps and money orders and accept parcels and letters to be registered or insured.

All carriers answer customers' questions about postal regulations and service and provide change-of-address cards and other postal forms when requested.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

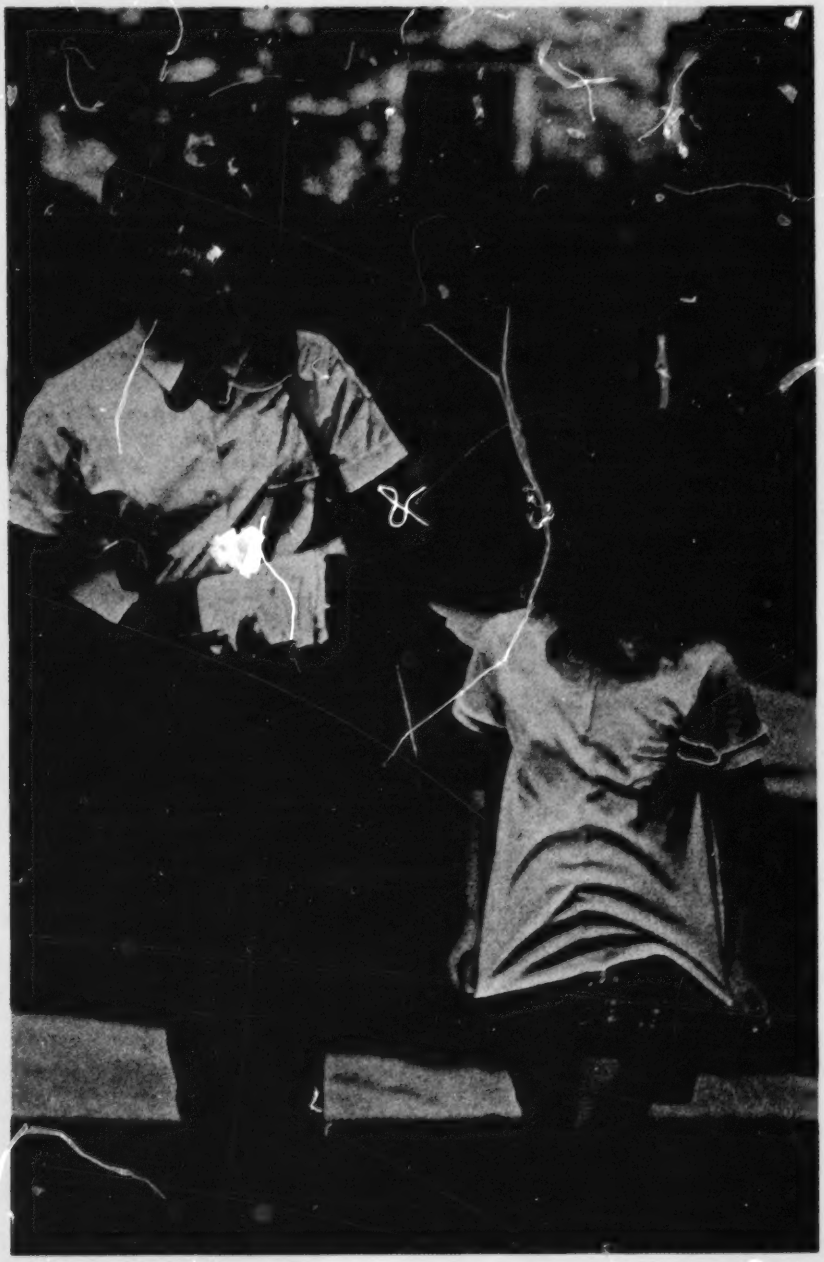
Mail carriers must be at least 18 and qualify on a four-part written examination. The first part tests clerical accuracy by asking the applicant to compare pairs of addresses and indicate which are identical. The second part tests ability to memorize mail distribution systems. The third measures reading ability, including vocabulary, and the fourth tests ability to do simple arithmetic.

If the carrier job involves driving, applicants must have a driver's license, a good driving record, and pass a road test. Before appointment, mail carriers must pass a physical examination and may be asked to show that they can lift and handle mail sacks weighing up to 70 pounds.

Applicants for mail carrier jobs should apply at the post office where they wish to work because each post office keeps a separate list of those who have passed the examination. Applicants' names are listed in order of their scores. Five extra points are added to the score of an honorably discharged veteran, and 10 extra points to the score of a veteran wounded in combat or disabled. When a vacancy occurs, the appointing officer chooses one of the top three applicants; the rest of the names remain on the list to be considered for future openings.

Mail carriers are classified as casual, part-time flexible, part-time regular, or full time. Casual workers are hired to help deliver mail during peak mailing periods during the year. Part-time flexible employees do not have a regular work schedule but replace absent workers and help with extra work as the need arises. Part-time regulars have a set work schedule—for example, 4 hours a day.

New carriers are trained on the job. They may begin as part-time flexible city carriers and become regular or full-time carriers in order of seniority as vacancies occur. Advancement possibilities are limited, but carriers can look forward to obtaining preferred routes or higher level jobs such as carrier technician as their seniority increases. A relatively small number of carriers become supervisors.



Carriers can work at their own pace as long as they cover their routes on time.

Employment Outlook

Employment of mail carriers—who numbered 250,000 in 1978—is expected to change very little through the mid-1980's. Although the number of homes and business establishments is expected to increase along with growth in population and business activity, anticipated cutbacks in the frequency of mail delivery should limit the need for additional carriers. Most job openings will result from the need to replace

experienced carriers who retire, die, or transfer to other occupations. Openings will be concentrated in metropolitan areas.

Earnings and Working Conditions

Part-time flexible carriers began at $6.18 an hour in 1976, with periodic increases up to $7.46 an hour after 8 years of satisfactory service. Hourly wages of part-time regular workers were $5.97 an hour, with periodic increases up to $7.21 an hour after 8 years of service. Full-time carriers were paid on an annual basis, beginning at $12,422 and increasing to a maximum of $15,007 after 8 years. Rural carriers are paid time-and-one-half for each hour they work over 40 hours a week or for each route mile over 42 miles. They also receive an allowance of 18 cents a mile for the use of their automobiles. Substitute rural carriers receive the same pay as the regular carriers whose routes they are covering. Rural carriers work either a 5- or 6-day week.

A full-time city carrier works an 8-hour day 5 days a week. City carriers who work more than 8 hours a day or 40 hours a week also are paid 1 1/2 times their regular rate of pay for the extra hours. City carriers also receive 10 percent additional pay for work between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Most carriers begin work early in the morning, in some cases as early as 4 a.m. if they have routes in the business district. Carriers spend most of their time outdoors in all kinds of weather delivering mail. Even those who drive often must walk when making deliveries, and must lift heavy sacks of parcel post when loading their vehicles.

The job, however, has its advantages. Carriers who begin work early in the morning are through by early afternoon. They are also free to work at their own pace as long as they cover their routes within a certain period of time. Moreover, full-time postal employees have more job security than workers in most other industries.

(For information on fringe benefits, see the statement on Postal Service occupations elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

Sources of Additional Information

Local post offices and State employment service offices can supply details about entrance examinations and employment opportunities for mail carriers.

POSTAL CLERKS

(D.O.T. 231.388 and 688, 232.138 and .368)

Nature of the Work

Most people are familiar with the post office window clerk who works behind the counter selling stamps or accepting parcel post. However, the majority of postal clerks are distribution clerks who sort incoming and outgoing mail in workrooms.

Postal clerks work either at local post offices or at large central mail processing facilities. At local post offices postal clerks sort the mail for delivery to individual customers. Incoming mail collected from the local neighborhood boxes is forwarded to the nearest mail processing center where clerks continue the process of sorting and preparing the mail for delivery.

There are more than 300 mail processing centers throughout the country which service the local post offices in designated geographic areas. Once mail is received at a center, letter sorting machine clerks, distribution clerks, and mailhandlers separate the mail into groups of letters, parcel post, magazines, and newspapers. Then mailhandlers feed the letters through stamp-canceling machines. After this step is completed, mailhandlers take the mail into other workrooms to be sorted according to destination. There, clerks read the ZIP codes and simply push keys corresponding to the letters' destinations on electronic mail-sorting machines; the letters drop into the proper slots. Finally, the mail is sent from the mail processing center to local post offices or to other centers for further sorting.

The clerks at post office windows provide a variety of services in addition to selling stamps and money orders. They weigh packages to determine postage and check to see if their condition is satisfactory for mailing. Clerks also register and insure mail and answer questions about postage rates, mailing restrictions, and other postal matters. Occasionally they may help a customer file a claim for a damaged package. In large post offices, a window clerk may provide only one or two of these services and may be called a registry, stamp, or money order clerk.

Places of Employment

Two out of every five employees of the U.S. Postal Service were postal clerks in 1976. The majority of the 270,000 postal clerks work at mail processing centers, although many still sort mail and provide window services at local post offices throughout the country.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Postal clerks must be at least 18 (at least 16 if they have a high school diploma) and qualify on a four-part written examination. The first part tests clerical accuracy by asking the applicant to compare pairs of addresses and indicate which are identical. The second part tests ability to memorize mail distribution systems. The third measures reading ability, including vocabulary, and the fourth tests ability to do simple arithmetic. Applicants must also pass a physical examination and may be asked to show that they can lift and handle mail sacks weighing up to 70 pounds. Applicants who are to work with an electronic sorting machine must pass a special examination which includes a machine aptitude test

Applicants should apply at the post office or sectional center where they wish to work because each keeps a separate list of those who have passed the examination. Applicants' names are listed in order of their scores. Five extra points are added to the score of an honorably discharged veteran, and 10 extra points to the score of a veteran wounded in com-

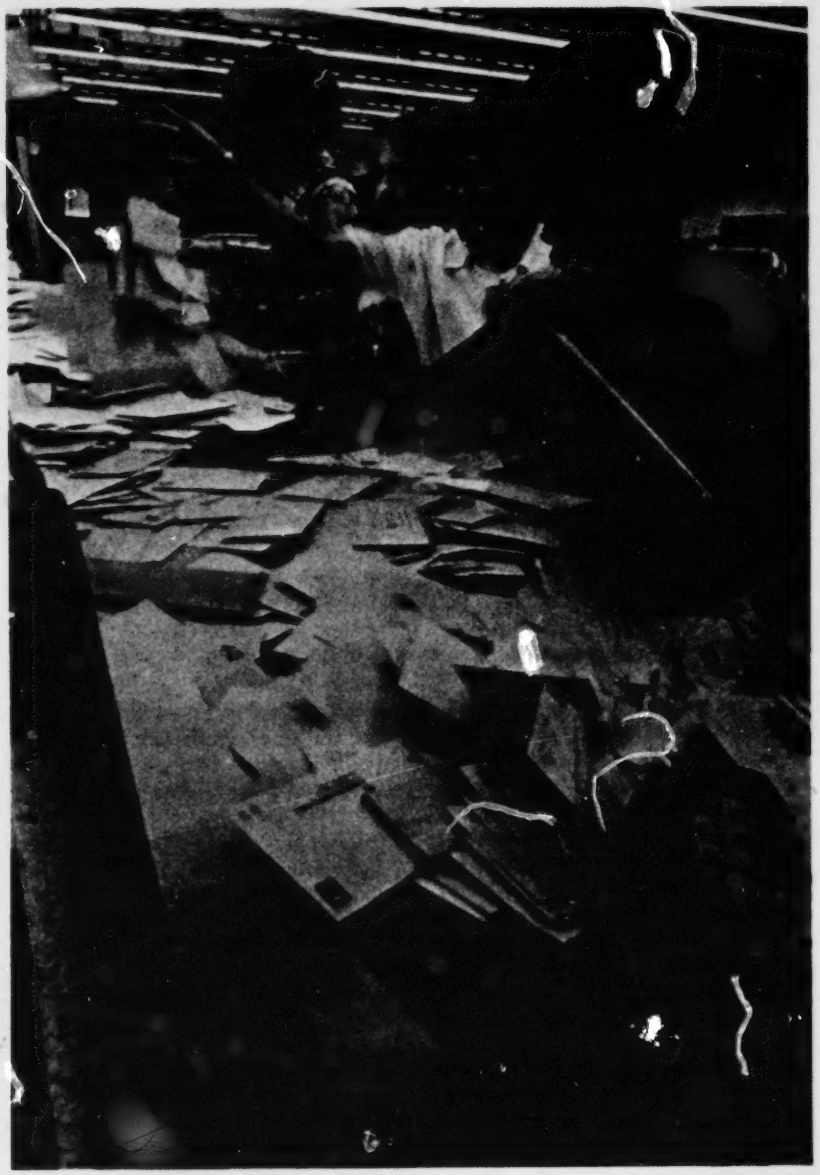
bat or disabled. Disabled veterans who have a compensable, service-connected disability of 10 percent or more are placed at the top of the list. When a vacancy occurs, the appointing officer chooses one of the top three applicants; the rest of the names remain on the list for future appointments.

New clerks are trained on the job. Most clerks begin with simple tasks to learn regional groupings of States, cities, and ZIP codes. To help clerks learn these groups, many post offices offer classroom instruction.

A good memory, good coordination, and the ability to read rapidly and accurately are important. Distribution clerks work closely with other clerks, frequently under the tension and strain of meeting mailing deadlines. Window clerks must be courteous and tactful when dealing with the public, especially when answering questions or receiving complaints.

Postal clerks are classified as casual, part-time flexible, part-time regular, or full time. Casual workers are hired to help handle the large amounts of mail during peak mailing periods at various times throughout the year, such as the Christmas season. Part-time flexible employees do not have a regular work schedule, but replace absent workers or help with extra work loads as the need arises. Part-time regular workers have a set work schedule—for example, 4 hours a day.

Most clerks begin as part-time flexible employees and become full-time workers as vacancies occur. Full-time clerks may bid for preferred assignments such as the day shift, a window job, or a higher level nonsupervisory position as expediter or window service technician. Clerks may qualify to become supervisors.



Postal clerks sorting incoming mail.

Employment Outlook

Employment of postal clerks is expected to decline through the mid-1980's due to falling mail volume and installation of more efficient sorting machines. The amount of mail handled by the postal service is expected to decrease because of rising postal rates, greater use of telephones, and development of other ways of distributing advertising circulars. Nevertheless, many job openings will result from the need to replace clerks who retire, die, or transfer to other occupations.

Earnings and Working Conditions

Postal clerks working full time started at $12,422 a year in 1976, but could advance to $15,007 after 8 years with satisfactory performance. Clerks working part-time flexible schedules started at $6.18 an hour and could advance to $7.46 an hour after 8 years. Clerks working part-time regular schedules started at $5.97 an hour and could advance to $7.21 an hour after 8 years. All clerks who work night shifts receive 10 percent additional pay. Besides good pay, full-time postal employees have more job security than workers in most other industries. (For information on fringe benefits, see statement on Postal Service occupations elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

Working conditions of clerks differ according to the specific work assignment and the amount and kind of laborsaving machinery in the post office. In small post offices, clerks may carry heavy mail sacks from one part of the building to another, and sort the mail by hand. In large post offices and mail processing centers, chutes and conveyors move the mail and much of the sorting is done by machine. In either case, clerks are on their feet most of the time, reaching for sacks and trays of mail and placing packages and bundles into sacks and trays while walking around the workroom.

Distribution clerks may become bored with the routine of sorting mail unless they enjoy trying to improve their speed and accuracy. They also may have to work at night or on weekends, because most large post offices process mail around the clock.

A window clerk, on the other hand, has a greater variety of duties, has frequent contact with the public, generally has a less strenuous job, and rarely has to work a night shift.

Sources of Additional Information

Local post offices and State employment service offices can supply details about entrance examinations and employment opportunities for postal clerks.

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What to Look For in this Reprint

To make the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* easier to use, each occupation or industry follows the same outline. Separate sections describe basic elements, such as work on the job, education and training needed, and salaries or wages. Some sections will be more useful if you know how to interpret the information as explained below.

The TRAINING, OTHER QUALIFICATIONS, AND ADVANCEMENT section indicates the preferred way to enter each occupation and alternative ways to obtain training. Read this section carefully because early planning makes many fields easier to enter. Also, the level at which you enter and the speed with which you advance often depend on your training. If you are a student, you may want to consider taking those courses thought useful for the occupations which interest you.

Besides training, you may need a State license or certificate. The training section indicates which occupations generally require these. Check requirements in the State where you plan to work because State regulations vary.

Whether an occupation suits your personality is another important area to explore. For some, you may have to make responsible decisions in a highly competitive atmosphere. For others, you may do only routine tasks under close supervision. To work successfully in a particular job, you may have to do one or more of the following:

- motivate others
- direct and supervise others
- work with all types of people
- work with things—you need good coordination and manual dexterity
- work independently—you need initiative and self-discipline
- work as part of a team
- work with details, perhaps numbers or laboratory reports
- help people
- use creative talents and ideas
- work in a confined area
- do physically hard or dangerous work
- work outside in all types of weather

A counselor can help you find out more about your interests and abilities so you can judge whether a job's characteristics suit you.

The EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK section tells whether or not the job market is likely to be favorable. Usually an occupation's expected growth is compared to the average projected growth rate for all occupations (20.1 percent between 1976 and 1985). The following phrases are used:

Much faster	50% or more
Faster	25.0 to 49.9%
About as fast	15.0 to 24.9%
Slower	4.0 to 14.9%
Little change	3.9 to -3.9%
Decline	-4.0% or more

Generally, job opportunities are favorable if employment is growing at least as fast as for the economy as a whole.

But, you would have to know the number of people competing with you to be sure of your prospects. Unfortunately, this supply information is lacking for most occupations.

There are exceptions, however, especially among professional occupations. Nearly everyone who earns a medical degree, for example, becomes a practicing physician. When the number of people pursuing relevant types of education and training and then entering the field can be compared with the demand, the outlook section indicates the supply/demand relationship as follows:

Excellent	Demand much greater than supply
Very good	Demand greater than supply
Good or favorable	Rough balance between demand and supply
May face competition	Likelihood of more supply than demand
Keen competition	Supply greater than demand

Competition or few job openings should not stop your pursuing a career that matches your aptitudes and interests. Even small or overcrowded occupations provide some jobs. So do those in which employment is growing very slowly or declining.

Growth in an occupation is not the only source of job openings because the number of openings from turnover can be substantial in large occupations. In fact, replacement needs are expected to create 70 percent of all openings between 1976 and 1985.

Finally, job prospects in your area may differ from those in the Nation as a whole. Your State employment service can furnish local information.

The EARNINGS section tells what workers were earning in 1976.

Which jobs pay the most is a hard question to answer because good information is available for only one type of earnings—wages and salaries—and not even this for all occupations. Although 9 out of 10 workers receive this form of income, many earn extra money by working overtime, night shifts, or irregular schedules. In some occupations, workers also receive tips or commissions based on sales or service. Some factory workers are paid a piece rate—an extra payment for each item they make.

The remaining 10 percent of all workers—the self-employed—includes people in many occupations—physicians, barbers, writers, and farmers, for example. Earnings for self-employed workers even in the same occupation differ widely because much depends on whether one is just starting out or has an established business.

Most wage and salary workers receive fringe benefits, such as paid vacations, holidays, and sick leave.

Workers also receive income in goods and services (payment in kind). Sales workers in department stores, for example, often receive discounts on merchandise.

Despite difficulties in determining exactly what people earn on the job, the Earnings section does compare occupational earnings by indicating whether a certain job pays more or less than the average for all nonsupervisors in private industry, excluding farming.

Each occupation has many pay levels. Beginners almost always earn less than workers who have been on the job for some time. Earnings also vary by geographic location but cities that offer the highest earnings often are those where living costs are most expensive.

What's an ad for the OOQ doing in a place like this?

The career information contained in the reprint you are reading was taken from the 1978-79 edition of the Occupational Outlook Handbook. But the Handbook is not the only source of useful career information published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Handbook's companion, the Occupational Outlook Quarterly, is published four times during the school year to keep subscribers up to date on new occupational studies completed between editions of the Handbook. The Quarterly also gives practical information on training and educational opportunities, salary trends, and new and emerging jobs—just what people need to know to plan careers.

If you were a subscriber to recent issues of the Occupational Outlook Quarterly, you could have learned

- how to write an effective employment resume
- what the long-term employment prospects are for college graduates
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- what's happening in the field of career education
- about career possibilities in such fields as journalism, mid-wifery, and shorthand reporting.

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